Subtracting Integers

Explore ideas and representations

Name _____ **Date** _____ **Score** _____ / 10

QUICK REVIEW

Subtracting means adding the opposite: $a - b = a + (-b)$. For example, $-3 - (-8) = -3 + 8 = 5$; $4 - 7 = -3$. A number-line move for subtraction is opposite to the sign of the subtracted number.

Worked example

Evaluate $(-3) - (2)$. Show an exact fraction or integer.

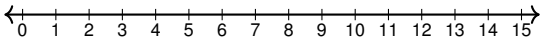
1. Use denominator 1: $-3 = -3/1$ and $2 = 2/1$.
2. Combine the signed numerators: $-3 - (2) = -5$.
3. The value is $-5/1 = -5$.
Answer: -5.

Practice Problems

Show your thinking.

1. Evaluate $(-7) - (3)$. Show an exact fraction or integer.

2. Model $(5) - (-9)$ with moves on the numbered line, then evaluate.



3. Find the missing number: $(-6) - x = -4$.

4. Find $(8) - (-4)$ and its opposite. Which is greater, or are they equal?

5. Evaluate $[(-3) - (7)] + (-3)$. Keep the intermediate result visible.

6. Predict whether $(4) - (-6)$ is positive, negative, or zero. Then compute to justify the prediction.

7. A check for $(-8) - (5)$ uses the result -13. Write a numerical inverse-operation check.

8. Find $(9) - (-3)$, then write the number that must be added to that result to make 0.

9. Evaluate $[(-14) - (9)] + (-14)$. Keep the intermediate result visible.

10. Reconstruct x from $x - (-8) = 25$. Check by substitution.

Answer Key

1. -10.
2. 14.
3. $x = -2$.
4. 12 and -12; greater 12.
5. -13.
6. 10, positive.
7. $(-13) + (5) = -8$.
8. Result 12; add -12.
9. -37.
10. $x = 17$.

Step-by-Step Solutions

Follow each calculation, then check your own work.

Problem 1

1. Use denominator 1: $-7 = -7/1$ and $3 = 3/1$.
2. Combine the signed numerators: $-7 - (3) = -10$.
3. The value is $-10/1 = -10$.

Problem 2

1. Subtracting -9 means adding its opposite, 9.
2. Start at 5 and move right 9 unit ticks.
3. The endpoint is $5 + 9 = 14$.

Problem 3

1. The amount taken away equals the starting amount minus the result.
2. $x = (-6) - (-4) = -2$.
3. Check in the original: $(-6) - (-2) = -4$.

Problem 4

1. Use denominator 1: $8 = 8/1$ and $-4 = -4/1$.
2. Combine the signed numerators: $8 - (-4) = 12$.
3. The value is $12/1 = 12$.
4. The opposite of 12 is -12; 12 is farther right on the number line.

Problem 5

1. Use denominator 1: $-3 = -3/1$ and $7 = 7/1$.
2. Combine the signed numerators: $-3 - (7) = -10$.
3. The value is $-10/1 = -10$.
4. Now add (-3): $-10 + (-3) = -13$.

Problem 6

1. Subtracting -6 means adding 6. Both addends are positive, so expect a positive sum.
2. Use denominator 1: $4 = 4/1$ and $-6 = -6/1$.
3. Combine the signed numerators: $4 - (-6) = 10$.
4. The value is $10/1 = 10$.

Problem 7

1. Use denominator 1: $-8 = -8/1$ and $5 = 5/1$.
2. Combine the signed numerators: $-8 - (5) = -13$.
3. The value is $-13/1 = -13$.
4. Inverse check: $(-13) + (5) = -8$.

Problem 8

1. Use denominator 1: $9 = 9/1$ and $-3 = -3/1$.
2. Combine the signed numerators: $9 - (-3) = 12$.
3. The value is $12/1 = 12$.
4. $12 + (-12) = 0$, so the additive inverse is -12.

Problem 9

1. Use denominator 1: $-14 = -14/1$ and $9 = 9/1$.
2. Combine the signed numerators: $-14 - (9) = -23$.
3. The value is $-23/1 = -23$.
4. Now add (-14): $-23 + (-14) = -37$.

Problem 10

1. Add back the amount that was subtracted.
2. $x = (25) + (-8) = 17$.
3. Check in the original: $(17) - (-8) = 25$.

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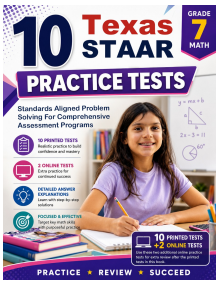

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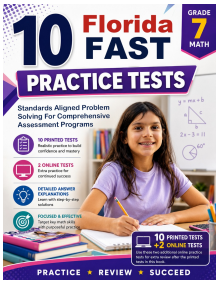

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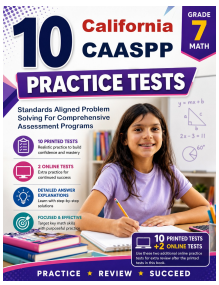

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